



A PATHWAY TO STATE & NATIONAL REFORM TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES



Winter 2015/2016 Issue

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The California Well-Being Project continued to support counties as they move forward in implementing the strategies that will make a difference for California children and families. Many important meetings and training sessions were held, including the launch of the evaluation efforts and a well-attended two-day Annual Title IV-E Waiver Meeting in November.

HIGHLIGHTS

Organized Practice Learning Collaborative on Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and Wraparound Training Workshop

On September 25, the Child Welfare department staff from all participating Project Counties convened on the University of California-Davis campus for an Organized Practice Learning Collaborative meeting offered by the Northern California Training Academy and CDSS. The collaborative focused on providing a space for counties to share successes and discuss challenges. At the start of the first session, all participants were asked to share something they were “excited about” in relation to advancing the Project.

Representatives from the counties’ Child Welfare departments were then asked to take part in an exercise that explored the following topics: communications, implementation, case plans, supervisor engagement, documentation and key practices.

The waiver counties’ Probation departments participated in a Wraparound Training Workshop facilitated by the UC Davis Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice. Attendees there discussed several topics, including the purpose and process of California Wraparound, the elements that drive the process, steps to achieve collaborative system efforts and practice facilitation and team building.

“We are excited about opportunities in prevention. Trying to do some things proactively rather than reactively.”

“Sacramento is excited to see transition from Signs of Safety to SOP.”

“We would like to learn from others, look for innovation and take some fresh ideas back.”

The Annual Waiver meeting began on November 16 with opening remarks by CDSS Director Will Lightbourne. He described the Project as a tool that gives the state the flexibility to invest funds where experience has shown they will have the best impact. “The demonstration builds on its own success and capitalizes on what worked and produces more resources for that investment.”

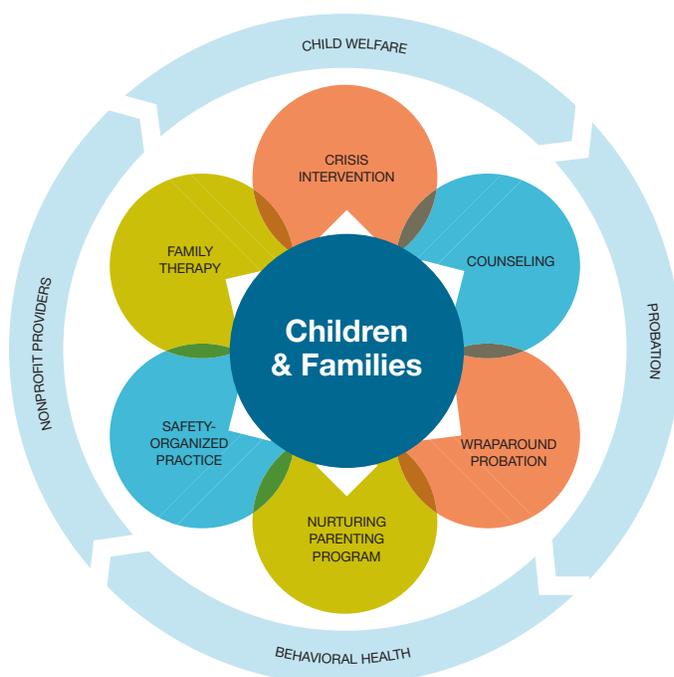
During his overview of the project, Mr. Lightbourne shared his vision of a successful project implementation period.

- **New partnerships with providers that have natural linkages and supportive relationships with families.**
- **More visible family engagement.**
- **Fewer children re-entering care.**
- **Reinvestment of savings.**

Later that day, counties participated in a communications workshop, heard from Mark Mahoney, Director of Revenue Management at State of Florida Department of Children and Families on Ensuring the Fiscal Well-Being of the Title IV-E Waiver, learned more about the evaluation from Westat and NCCD, and engaged in a discussion with Pete Cervinka, Program Deputy Director for Benefits and Services, on the importance of the waiver, particularly in light of Federal Child Welfare Financing Reform.

The following day, Greg Rose, Deputy Director of the Children and Family Services Division, discussed accomplishments achieved during the first year of implementation. Counties were also able to display their accomplishments on posters that were designed to celebrate their achievements in the first year.

WAIVER INFOGRAPHIC SHARED AT THE MEETING



“There is a quality of love, family and attachment that no other system can make up for. That’s what the waiver is all about—working to keep children safe within their own communities.”

Will Lightbourne, Director of California Department of Social Services

“I have hopes for this demonstration project and high hopes that California can come together to do right by California kids and families. Along the way, the challenges we encounter should help us be stronger and move to our ultimate goals.”

Greg Rose, Deputy Director of the Children and Family Services Division

EVALUATION PROGRESS

The CDSS contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) and Westat, two organizations with extensive experience and complementary skills, to serve as the evaluation team for the Title IV-E Waiver Child Welfare Demonstration Project.

- **The National Council on Crime and Delinquency** is a nonprofit research organization that promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice.
- **Westat** is a research company known for expertise in evaluation, statistical methodology, and state-of-the-art data collection. (They currently evaluate the Permanency Innovations Initiative, with two sites in California, Recognize Intervene Support Empower [RISE] in Los Angeles County and California Partners for Permanency [CAPP] in Los Angeles, Santa Clara, Fresno, and Humboldt counties.)

“The evaluation team has a fantastic group of collaborators in the county and CDSS representatives; their contributions have greatly improved our measurement plan.”

Kristen Johnson, Senior Researcher, NCCD

EVALUATION TIMELINE

October 2015 - February 2016

- Establish meeting schedule to plan and monitor evaluation progress.
- Finalize evaluation plan for the project and each county.
- Secure CDSS and federal approval for the evaluation plan.
- Prepare an application for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the evaluation from California’s Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS).
- Steering committee workgroups will continue defining measures of well-being and trauma, family engagement and fidelity.
- The evaluation team will finish its calls with counties about the data inventory.
- Quarterly calls with the evaluation team and individual counties will begin.
- The logic model for the evaluation will be finalized in February 2016.

March 2016 - September 2019

PROCESS	OUTCOME	COST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the IRB application and work with CPHS to secure approval. • Provide regular reports to counties, CDSS and the Administration for Children and Families as findings develop. • Identify methodologies for sub-studies. • Develop data-collection measures and tools, in consultation with participating counties. • Collect data through surveys. • Focus groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain administrative and CWS/ CMS data regularly. Continue to work closely with counties to understand their implementation of the Project and their data. • Compare pre-implementation outcomes to post-implementation outcomes using interrupted time series design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain financial records about services prior to, during, and after demonstration implementation. • Obtain information about funding sources. • Examine feasibility of a cost-effectiveness study.

COUNTY FOCUS

ALAMEDA COUNTY is planning to establish baseline measures for their evaluation of Safety Organized Practice (SOP)/Core Practice Model (CPM) by surveying supervisors and workers. They have an evaluation task team, and are continuing to develop ways to monitor evaluation strategies, including conducting local evaluations of their evidenced-based parenting approach and their Commercially and Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) prevention efforts.

BUTTE COUNTY is developing comprehensive approaches to establishing baseline fidelity measures for the SOP/CPM implementation. Butte County Probation's implementation of Wraparound includes a Strengthening Families program which represents a unique learning opportunity.

LAKE COUNTY will be evaluating child and youth living arrangement improvements and evaluating family relationships for probation (using the Family Advocacy and Support Tool [FAST] and Program of Assertive Community Treatment [PACT] data) as well as SOP implementation (using Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths [CANS] and Structure Decision Making [SDM] data).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY will be evaluating Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Probation plans to evaluate the impact of wraparound, Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST). Both agencies are considering an evaluation of after-care services.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY is engaged in the Crossover Youth Practice Model, a multi-disciplinary effort to improve outcomes for youth, and is strengthening CQI efforts.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY plans to measure the relationship between SOP implementation and disproportionality. They are also planning to take a look at the effect of increased coaching of SOP on implementation fidelity. They are considering a rigorous evaluation of coaching of parents during visitation, and of family finding efforts.



SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY is engaging with a local evaluator to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the implementation of SOP, to understand how well the training and coaching is taking effect. They also would like to evaluate visitation efforts. Probation has a peer-to-parent coaching model that they want to evaluate.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY intends to evaluate the impact of SOP with fidelity assessments, use of coaches and coaching activities, and parent/guardian surveys.

SONOMA COUNTY is in the midst of a phased implementation of SOP/CPM that includes use of Team Decision Making and training as well as coaching of staff.

PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

State Participation in National Waiver Discussion

The CDSS Program, Fiscal and Research staff, along with representatives from the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, the Sacramento County Probation Department and the Project's evaluation team (NCCD and Westat), attended the 17th Annual Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects Meeting September 1-3, 2015 in Washington, D.C.

Training and Support for County Implementation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS coordinated a session on Understanding the Critical Elements of Wraparound to provide training for participating County Probation Department (CPD) representatives on September 25, and a second session on December 18, both at UC Davis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS held the initial Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Learning Collaborative meeting, including participating Child Welfare Department representatives and their respective Regional Training Academy representatives on September 25, and a second session on December 15, both at UC Davis.
Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS continued monthly Evaluation Steering Committee calls to keep counties informed of progress on the evaluation and gather county input for the evaluation plan. The CDSS awarded the Project evaluation contract to NCCD on September 29, 2015, with Westat as the primary subcontractor. The CDSS and NCCD hosted an Evaluator Orientation, including participating CWD and CPD representatives, on October 6-7, 2015 to introduce the evaluation team to the counties and discuss counties' roles in developing the evaluation plan and conducting the evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCCD and Westat began collecting information on county data collection systems for an Information Systems Inventory. The evaluation team drafted the federally required plan for the evaluation and circulated it to CDSS and the counties for input. The evaluation team conferred with several counties about interventions other than SOP/CPM and Wraparound that might be evaluated in separate sub-studies.
Technical Assistance (TA)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CDSS issued County Fiscal Letter (CFL) 15/16-02 addressing Project claiming instructions and Quarterly Fiscal Supplemental Form (QFSF) updates on August 28, 2015. The CDSS issued CFL 15/16-10 addressing commonly asked claiming questions from participating CWDs and CPDs on September 2, 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TA support continued through the end of the year with quarterly fiscal calls and responding to county fiscal questions.
Project Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) approved the Initial Development and Implementation Report on October 30, 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDSS Program staff held monthly county-specific information sessions with Outcomes and Accountability, Office of Child Abuse Prevention, and Fiscal Policy Bureau Project team members.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

[California Well-Being Project Website](#)
Title IV-E California Well-Being Project
California Department of Social Services

744 P Street, MS8-11-86, Sacramento, CA 95814
 Phone: (916) 651-6600
IV-EWaiver@dss.ca.gov